

IN THE CLAIMS

1-8 (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A method for detecting methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) in a sample, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) preparing a reaction mixture comprising:

a sample;

a first oligonucleotide primer comprising (i) a sequence homologous to a target sequence of an RNA derived from the *mecA* gene of MRSA and (ii) an RNA polymerase promoter sequence at the 5'-end of the sequence in (i);

a second oligonucleotide primer; ~~wherein either said first oligonucleotide primer or said second oligonucleotide primer comprises an RNA polymerase promoter sequence at the 5'-region;~~

an enzyme or a mixture of enzymes having (i) RNA-dependent DNA polymerase activity, (ii) ribonuclease activity that hydrolyzes RNA of an RNA-DNA hybrid without hydrolyzing single-stranded and double-stranded RNA or DNA, (iii) DNA-dependent DNA polymerase activity, and (iv) DNA-dependent RNA polymerase activity; and

a cleaving oligonucleotide probe ~~if said first oligonucleotide primer comprises the RNA polymerase promoter sequence, wherein said cleaving oligonucleotide probe comprising a sequence complementary to a region overlapping and adjacent to the 5'-end of an target sequence of the RNA derived from the *mecA* gene of MRSA, wherein the cleaving oligonucleotide probe does not comprise the RNA polymerase promoter sequence of the first primer;~~

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